

Obituary.

LOUISA ALDRICH-BLAKE, D.B.E., M.D., M.S.,

Dean of the London School of Medicine for Women.

A BRIEF announcement was made in the JOURNAL of last week of the death of Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake, which unexpectedly occurred on December 28th, 1925, at her house in Nottingham Place, Marylebone. Although for some little time past her health had caused anxiety to her friends, yet it was characteristic of her reticence regarding her own trouble that only those who were most intimate with her were aware of her condition. Up to the last she was engaged in active work. She was operating at the Royal Free Hospital a month previously, and had attended a School Council meeting only a week before she died.

Louisa Brandreth Aldrich-Blake was the daughter of the Rev. F. J. Aldrich-Blake, and was born in 1865 at Chingford, Essex, of which parish her father was at that time rector. She was educated chiefly at home and then for a year and a half at Cheltenham Ladies' College, where she passed the Preliminary Scientific Examination (now the First Medical). In 1887 she entered the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women, and in 1892 she passed the examination for the M.B. degree of the University of London with first class honours in medicine and obstetric medicine. In the following year she graduated B.S., also with first class honours, and qualified for the gold medal. She obtained the degree of M.D.Lond. in 1894, and the M.S.Lond. in 1895. She was the first woman holder of the latter degree.

In 1895 Miss Aldrich-Blake was appointed assistant surgeon at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. She became full surgeon in 1902, and senior surgeon in 1910, which post she only relinquished at the beginning of 1925, but still remained on the consulting staff. She was the first woman to hold the posts of surgical registrar, anaesthetist, and lecturer on anaesthetics at the Royal Free Hospital; she held these posts for several years. Soon after the war Miss Aldrich-Blake was invited by the Royal Free Hospital to become a member of the consulting staff. She discontinued her active surgical work there only about a month before her death. In February, 1906, Miss Aldrich-Blake had been appointed Vice-Dean of the London School of Medicine for Women. She succeeded Miss Cock as Dean in 1914. Despite the distinguished positions she held elsewhere, Miss Aldrich-Blake for many years continued as surgeon to the Canning Town Women's Settlement Hospital. The distance was considerable and the eastward journey must have been irksome, yet the house-surgeon could always

depend on an immediate and willing response to a call for Miss Aldrich-Blake's valued help.

It is difficult to realize how one individual could have successfully accomplished all the war work which Miss Aldrich-Blake undertook. Immediately upon the outbreak of war she was very active in equipping a group of medical women who were prepared to go to Brussels, but, as it eventually proved impossible to establish a hospital there, the unit began work at Château Tournelle, near Cherbourg, in the autumn. She herself worked at this hospital during the Christmas vacation, 1914-15. During the summer vacations of 1915 and 1916 she worked at the hospital at Royaumont of which Miss Ivens was in charge, thereby relieving her for a time. In the spring of 1916 Miss Aldrich-Blake approached all the women on the *Medical Register*. From the replies received, eighty women were sent to

hospitals in Malta, Egypt, or Salonika in August and September, 1916. In October, 1916, on hearing from the War Office that fifty more medical women were needed for service with the R.A.M.C. in English hospitals, Miss Aldrich-Blake again negotiated with all the women who had qualified in the preceding ten years, and secured the requisite number in a very short time. While she was thus supplying and equipping doctors, and herself acting as relief in her own vacation time, she was also doing double duty at the Royal Free Hospital. She continued this work until the return of the regular surgeons in 1919. She was also visiting surgeon to the W.A.A.C. Hospital at Isleworth throughout its existence, and consulting surgeon for the women patients at the Herbert Hospital, Woolwich. All this extra work, in addition to her own private practice, was quietly and unostentatiously accomplished. Her work received



DAME LOUISA ALDRICH-BLAKE.
(After the portrait by Sir William Orpen, R.A.)

Royal approval when she was created Dame Commander in the Order of the British Empire among the New Year Honours of 1925.

Miss Aldrich-Blake contributed an article on "Pain as a symptom of pelvic trouble" to the *Practitioner's Encyclopaedia of Midwifery and Diseases of Women*; and an article on "Abdomino-perineal excision of the rectum by a new method" to the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* in 1903. She had long been a member of the British Medical Association, and at the Annual Meeting at Bradford in 1924 she held the office of vice-president of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. She was an active and valued member of the Reception Committee which had charge of the arrangements in connexion with the Royal opening of the Association's new House in London last summer, and in that capacity was one of those presented to the King and Queen during the ceremony on July 13th.

None worked harder than the Dean for the accomplishment of a fitting memorial of the jubilee of the London

School of Medicine for Women—namely, the establishing of three chairs. At the jubilee dinner held in the Guildhall in 1924 striking testimony of the affectionate regard of students past and present was given. When the Dean rose to speak repeated cheers were given in an outburst which, on retrospection, seems to have been accompanied by more than usual emotion. Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake's professional work was distinguished by an efficient thoroughness which, coupled with her characteristic self-effacement, gave to her personality its distinctive charm. As colleague, teacher, and dean she will be mourned by all the medical women and students who had the honour to be associated with her.

The funeral took place on January 1st from the School of Medicine for Women, the service being held at St. Pancras Church. After the cremation the ashes were taken to Dame Louisa's home at Welsh-Bicknor, Ross, Herefordshire. A message of personal regret and sympathy was received by the School of Medicine for Women from Her Majesty the Queen, expressing the loss she feels has been sustained by the profession. Many were the floral tributes sent from various associations and groups of people expressing the affection held for her by those with whom she had worked. The funeral service was attended by representatives of all the institutions with which Dame Louisa had been connected, and of many medical bodies and charitable organizations, together with a large number of medical men and women who had been associated with her in professional or private life. The University of London was represented by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gardner; the Royal College of Physicians by the President, Sir Humphry Rolleston, Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge; the Royal College of Surgeons by Mr. Walter Spencer, Vice-President; the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education by Sir George Newman; the Royal Society of Medicine by the President, Sir StClair Thomson; the British Medical Association by Dr. Christine Murrell (member of Council) and Dr. C. Courtenay Lord (Assistant Medical Secretary); and the Medical Women's Federation by Dr. Jane Walker and Miss Frances Ivens.

The following appreciations of the work and character of this most distinguished medical woman have been contributed at our request by colleagues and friends:

Miss M. M. CHADBURN, M.D., B.S., senior surgeon, South London Hospital for Women; late surgeon, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, writes:

As one of the few medical women who entered the London School of Medicine for Women on the same day as Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake, and one who has been her colleague ever since, until her too early and much lamented death, I would add my tribute to her memory.

My recollection of Miss Aldrich-Blake as a student was that of a shy, quiet, steady, solid personality, invariably producing brilliantly good work without any fuss or trouble. It soon became evident that to specialize in surgery was her aim, and I remember we thought her lucky in that owing to private means she could afford to wait the opportunity. She did not have to wait, however, as the only opening to practise surgery as a specialist likely to occur for years came at the right moment in her career, and she was appointed surgeon to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital (then the New Hospital for Women). It was equally as fortunate for the hospital to have secured Miss Aldrich-Blake's services as it was for the inexperienced brilliant young aspirant to surgery to have acquired her opportunity of which she was to make such splendid use.

Miss Aldrich-Blake qualified at a time when opposition to women in the profession was still very marked, and here again she was a source of strength to the cause; any work she did was sure to be good; her serenity, equanimity, and self-reliance could stand the jars undisturbed which might have upset the even tenor of work for many people. Happily combined in her character were capacity for great intellectual achievement, a grave sense of responsibility, and real administrative power. She was impartial in judgement, just even towards what she most disliked or disapproved. I have often, in her younger days, heard her described by her senior colleagues as "a pillar of strength."

The shyness of her younger days to a great extent wore off with time and the necessities of her prominent position and varied experience, but by nature she was shy and quiet, rather than retiring. She was ready to do all the work that came to her hand, but it came to her rather than that she sought it, and it came to her because of the excellence of her doing. Her physique was such that hard work was easy to her.

Miss Aldrich-Blake was not a fighting pioneer, as Miss Jex-Blake and Mrs. Garrett Anderson had to be, but she was a necessary sequence to their work if the position of medical women was to be established—a pioneer in solid, brilliant work, a pioneer whose character influenced for good all who came in contact with her, and one to whom, fortunately for her, it fell to demonstrate rather than to fight. I doubt if she could have fought actively; it was not in her nature, though she could certainly sit tight and hold on against opposition, and this without any ill will to those fighting her; she expected the truth to win by its own weight.

I have known her work well and intimately all her working life, and never known it to fall below the best; second best was unknown to her. She was not a quick thinker, but her judgement was excellent. She gave full time and thought to every case, whether minor or major. As an operator she was bold, courageous, level-headed, thoughtful; her hands were good to watch at work—her finger-tips obviously carried brains in them. Miss Aldrich-Blake was one of the first English surgeons to do Wertheim's operation for carcinoma of the cervix uteri (see *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL*, 1905, vol. ii, p. 699); she also developed and improved the technique of the abdomino-perineal route of excision of the rectum.

Miss Aldrich-Blake was loved, admired, and esteemed alike by colleagues, patients, and friends. As Dean of the Women's Medical School she was very popular with the students; her character and attitude towards her profession was a profound influence for good among them. It can be truly said of her that she has joined

"the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."

Lady BARRETT, C.B.E., M.D., writes:

Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake was one of the first medical women in active practice whom it was my privilege to meet when I entered hospital as a student. I remember she impressed us all as being a woman brilliant in surgical work, level-headed in judgement, and singularly unconscious of herself or of possessing unusual ability. We took it for granted that her help was always available for any who (as she would have put it) thought it worth having. She was somewhat shy and reticent, alike to colleagues and juniors. This characteristic made it perhaps difficult for many to know her intimately, but by all she was entirely trusted. This has been proved in the course of many years by the number of her colleagues who turned to her instinctively when needing surgical help for themselves. As Dean of the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women she has done a great work. Her balanced judgement and sympathetic appreciation of both sides of debatable questions have been invaluable in the deliberations of the council for over ten years, and her selfless outlook on life has enabled her to be a unifying influence, drawing ever closer the bonds between the educational work of the Medical School and the philanthropic side of the hospital. She has set a high standard for all who follow after.

Dr. ARTHUR G. PHEAR, C.B., senior physician to the Royal Free Hospital, writes:

Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake was one of those rare and noble characters for whom self-interest counts as nothing. She was indifferent to worldly success, yet to her came, unsought, professional success and worldly distinction in no small measure. Her dominant motive was service, and

throughout her active life she devoted herself to the welfare of the medical school of which she was dean, and of the two hospitals on the staffs of which she served as a distinguished member. Perhaps it was in the fulfilment of her responsibilities as Dean of the London School of Medicine for Women that she found her greatest opportunities. Here indeed she proved herself one of those who "give counsel by their understanding." She was accessible to all, and all came to her, students and staff alike, when they were in any difficulty, assured of a sympathetic hearing and of wise and helpful advice. She found ample scope for her unusual administrative faculties on various committees of both school and hospital, and her insight and wide experience were of great value in promoting the harmonious working of the two separate, though co-ordinated, institutions. Of her it might have been truly said that "labor vitæ vita est," and to her life's work she brought human qualities of sympathy and a wide understanding that endeared her to all with whom she had to do. From her devotion to the interests of others there sprang a measure of serenity and happiness that lasted to the end, undimmed by the suffering of her later days, and the memory of her example and personality will remain as an enduring help and encouragement to all who knew her.

Dr. MARY SCHARLIEB, C.B.E., President of the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women, writes:

From her student days Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake was always remarkable for her unselfishness, modesty, and truth. Great as she was as a surgeon and as an administrator, she was far greater as a guide and leader among medical women and students. All this was clearly demonstrated during the last difficult and painful eighteen months of her life. She knew her fate, and she suffered much disability, but never once did she falter, never once was she wanting in cheerful performance of her manifold duties. Her winning smile and serene gaiety of manner persisted to the very end, and one of her last acts was to secure yet one more benefit to the hospital she served so well.

RICHARD CATON, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P.,

Emeritus Professor of Physiology and Consulting Physician,
Royal Infirmary, Liverpool.

It is with great regret we have to record the death, at Haslemere, Surrey, of Dr. Richard Caton, one of Liverpool's honoured citizens and a highly esteemed member of our profession. His health during the past six months had not been good, and he suffered from sciatica, which greatly impeded his usual activity. Mentally alert, he sought the South to escape the chilly months of the North; although retired from medical practice, he continued to take a keen interest in the university, and was an active member of the University Council down to the time of his death.

Dr. Richard Caton belonged to a Lancashire family originating in Heysham and Caton. He was born in 1842, and received his general education at Scarborough Grammar School, where he developed a taste for classics which he assiduously cultivated throughout his life. He received his medical education at Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.B., Ch.M. in 1867. In 1868 he settled in Liverpool, and was soon identified with the Liverpool Royal Infirmary School of Medicine, and had his share in its development into the Medical Faculty of the University College of Liverpool. In 1870 he became M.D. Edinburgh, receiving the gold medal for his thesis on migration of leucocytes. Dr. Caton did some original work on localization of movements in the cerebrum in the early seventies, and owing to his interest in physiology was appointed lecturer in that subject in the then School of Medicine. This post he held until the Holt chair of physiology was founded, when he became the first professor of physiology in the new University College. When he relinquished this chair he was succeeded by Professor Francis Gotch, and was accorded the title of Emeritus Professor for his long and distinguished services. Dr. Caton was one of the most active promoters of university education in Liverpool. He was a seer in this respect, and the idea of the University College being one of the constituent colleges of Victoria University, Manchester,

received his full support. This connexion existed until 1903, when the University of Liverpool was founded and the University College merged in it. His interest in university education in Liverpool did not diminish. He served the university in many capacities; he was its first representative on the General Medical Council, and held that office down to the time of his death. He had also been Pro-Chancellor.

Dr. Caton was a painstaking physician and a good teacher in clinical medicine. He paid special attention to diseases of the heart, and published an interesting and suggestive monograph, *Prevention of Valvular Disease of the Heart*. He took great interest in the foundation of the new Heart Hospital shortly to be opened in Liverpool. He warmly supported the cause, and recognized at the outset the importance of such a hospital for diseases of the heart. When he retired from the active staff of the Royal Infirmary he was appointed consulting physician, and afterwards held the office of president. In the Liverpool Medical Institution he held the office of vice-president in 1881 and president in 1896, and celebrated in 1919 the jubilee of his membership. His public services were recognized by the Universities of Liverpool, of Edinburgh, and of Padua by the conferment of the LL.D. degree. At Padua Dr. Caton represented the University of Liverpool at the 700th anniversary of the foundation of that famous seat of learning.

Dr. Caton was keenly alive to the importance of a high standard of public health, and his name has been associated with every form of progress in the city. A man of such varied interests and accomplishments naturally attracted the attention of the civic rulers, and in 1907, amid universal approval, he was chosen Lord Mayor of the city. If Dr. Caton was a party man he was so only for the advancement of the well-being and welfare of the city. As long as progress was being made he cared little which party performed it. He realized the importance of example and the constant reiteration in the most telling language of the rules of health. He ever insisted on the personal equation, and reminded all and sundry that slums were due in large measure to the ignorance of the rudiments of personal health. Dr. Caton travelled a good deal and was fond of mountain climbing. His fondness for the classics brought him the chairmanship of the Liverpool branch of the Classical Association, and he was a member of the Hellenic Society. He travelled in Greece and published papers on *The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios*, *Hippocrates and Cos*, and *The Medicine and Medicine God of the Egyptians*.

Dr. Caton took a great interest in the cathedral, and was at one time joint honorary secretary of the executive committee. During the war he was honorary colonel, West Lancashire Division, R.A.M.C., and was indefatigable in his efforts for securing the comfort and nursing of the sick. He was chairman of the Nursing Service Committee (Liverpool branch), British Red Cross Society, and in March, 1920, received the decoration of C.B.E. in recognition of his services.

As a man to meet for the first time his affability was a striking feature; he had the happy knack of placing new acquaintances at their ease. Singularly free from pettiness of mind, he made full allowance for the foibles of human nature. Generous almost to a fault, he did a great deal of quiet unostentatious charity, and many have been relieved in their necessities, never knowing who the generous friend was.

Dr. Caton married the daughter of the late W. S. Ivory, W.S., of Edinburgh. Two daughters were born, one of whom is the wife of Professor Ormerod, professor of Greek at the University of Leeds. Dr. Caton had been a widower for some years; but his life had been rendered happy by the solicitude of his daughter. Dr. Caton leaves behind a host of sorrowing friends in all ranks of society, a fragrant memory of a life well spent, a race well run, and an example to be followed by all who love their fellow man.

Dr. V. C. DE BOINVILLE (Liverpool) sends us the following tribute to his memory:

As one who has been intimately associated with the late Dr. Caton, as his family physician, for the past eighteen years, I venture to write these few lines. In Dr. Caton,